United Nations A/53/169/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 August 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Item 72 (m) of the provisional agenda*
General and complete disarmament: small arms

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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98-24490 (E) 010998

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Japan

[Original: English]

[12 August 1998]

1. General position

1. The excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms has led to enormous human tragedies and economic and social problems. These problems are exacerbated by the absence of agreed global norms or standards to be used in reducing such accumulation or transfer. The international community should address the problems as a matter of utmost importance and urgency. The United Nations has been playing a central role in enhancing international awareness regarding the problems and initiating international action-oriented efforts.

2. Japan has been vigorously supporting the work at the United Nations since Prime Minister Murayama urged the United Nations to set up a panel to address the problems in June 1995 at the United Nations Conference on disarmament issues held at Nagasaki. Japan introduced a draft resolution on small arms at the General Assembly in the same year, and the resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority [resolution 50/70 B of 12 December 1995]. In accordance with the resolution, the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms was established in June 1996 and tasked to prepare the Secretary-General's report for consideration at the 1997 session of the General Assembly. The Panel, for which the former head of the delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Mitsuro Donowaki, was appointed as Chair, held three regional workshops in addition to its three regular sessions and submitted its report to the Secretary-General in August 1997. At the regular session of the General Assembly in the same year, Japan again introduced a draft resolution which endorsed the recommendations contained in the Panel's report and further urged the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts to ensure the implementation of the recommendations. This new Group of Governmental Experts was established in May and Mr. Donowaki was again chosen as Chair. The Group of Experts is expected to submit a report to the Secretary-General in 1999. Japan will hold a workshop in Tokyo from 7 to 9 September 1998 in order to support the work of the Group. The Workshop will serve as a good opportunity for the exchange of views and information-sharing among the Group and other international bodies which are also addressing certain aspects of the problems of small arms.

2. Implementation of the recommendations of the Panel

3. As stated in the General Assembly resolution [resolution 52/37 J of 9 December 1997], all States Members of the United Nations are called upon to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. In the case of Japan, possession, manufacturing, and other dealings with guns and all other types of small arms are under strict national controls and strong law enforcement. The export of weapons is also prohibited in principle. Japan is also a strong promoter of strengthening firearms regulation and enforcement internationally at the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and other forums.

4. Japan places particular emphasis, among the measures recommended in the Secretary-General's report, upon the following three points:

(a) *Promotion of the proportional and integrated approach to security and development*. This new approach deserves greater attention and further efforts in putting it into practice. Japan recognizes the important roles of international organizations and bilateral donors. In this regard, Japan will invite representatives of the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to the Tokyo Workshop in September in order to have them share their ideas and experiences with the Group of Experts. Japan will also participate in and contribute to the International Conference on Sustainable Disarmament for Sustainable Development to be held at Brussels in October where this issue will be extensively dealt with. The Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), which Japan together with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) will host in October, will also contribute in promoting the idea;

(b) *Development of guidelines for peace negotiators to plan disarmament, including weapons collection and disposal and for peacekeeping missions to implement their mandates*. Effective disarmament and demobilization in the post-conflict areas will significantly curb the excessive accumulation of small arms. The Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat is expected to study the past experiences of the previous peacekeeping operations in accordance with the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations this year. The study could develop into the kind of guidelines envisaged by the Panel's recommendations;

(c) *Prevention of illicit trafficking of small arms*. The United Nations Group of Experts is paying particular attention to this area. There are already some regional achievements such as the recent Convention of the Organization of American States (OAS) against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives and other related materials. While the OAS Convention focuses upon the control of the international transfer of firearms and explosives on a regional basis, the United Nations will have to address the problem on a global basis with any additional practical measures. In this sense, Japan attaches importance to the elaboration of an international instrument to combat the illicit manufacturing of trafficking in firearms in the context of the draft United Nations convention against organized transnational crime. For example, the enhancement of transparency of legal transfer will have to be covered. Regarding the marking of guns, the expertise of the International Criminal Police Organization – Interpol – and of some interested countries would prove to be useful. This is one of the main items which will be discussed at the Tokyo Workshop.

3. View on convening an international conference

5. In connection with paragraph (c) above, the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts is tasked to consider and make recommendations to the Secretary-General on "the possibility of an international conference on illicit arms trade in all its aspects", taking into account those views submitted to the Secretary-General by Member States. In view of the utmost importance and urgency of the matter, Japan strongly believes that it is necessary for the international community to meet in the near future at a high level, possibly at the ministerial level, in order to take up the problems of small arms and agree on a common agenda for action.

6. The purpose of such an international conference will have to be to address all the aspects of the illicit transfer of small arms. However, such an unprecedented and unique opportunity should not necessarily be confined to the narrow fields, but could cover the whole range of the issues of small arms which the Group of Experts is currently dealing with,

including the problems of disarmament, demobilization and economic development of post-conflict areas.

7. Japan believes that the conference should be held at the earliest time possible while it is up to the Group of Governmental Experts to submit its recommendation on this question to the Secretary-General next year. In this respect Japan takes note of the Swiss willingness to host the international conference as early as in the year 2000 as a proposal to be seriously considered.

8. Japan will continue to encourage and support further deliberation by the Group of Experts.